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ABSTRACT

This paper describes efforts by the Division of Urban Leadership of Policy Studies in Education at the University of Missouri (Kansas City) to transform its traditional educational administration program. The program, developed in 1991, is based on the premise that school leaders must possess the ability to develop: (1) into a facilitator of relationships and outcomes; (2) collaborative and participative planning and decision-making structures (teams); (3) support networks from the community and within the school; (4) human and fiscal resources that enhance and support the outcomes and purposes of the school; (5) school organizations as cultures of renewal, risk, problem solving, trust, and caring; and (6) a school culture of reflective and critical thought concerning learning theory and practice, and human development. The course requirements, with the exception of the practicum, were combined into three thematic courses: Foundations of School Organization and Leadership; Management and Administration of Schools; and School, Teacher, and Student Development. Comments from student portfolios indicate that students valued the cooperative and supportive cohorts, the relevance of the courses to real-life situations, and stimulating discussion and debate. (LMI)

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An Innovative Approach to Developing Transformational School Leaders

The Masters and Educational Specialists Degree Programs
Division of Urban Leadership and Policy Studies in Education
School of Education
University of Missouri-Kansas City

A Presentation
by
Dr. Johnetta Hudson

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An Approach to Developing Transformational School Leaders

The Masters and Educational Specialists Programs at the University of Missouri - Kansas City

Changing school demographics, constant criticism of instructional programs and the continued legitimate outcry for school reform that decreases the gap between low and high performing students create a need for a new breed of educational leader. Traditionally, change has been imposed upon educators within the schools by authority figures at the top and others outside of education such as policy makers and other governmental agencies. The principal was considered the key decision maker, the change agent, or the person primarily responsible for implementing the change. Teachers, parents, and other constituencies were "followers" and had very little voice in changes to be made within the schools of which they were an integral part. Since there is widespread belief and data that schools are not adequately preparing our students for the 21st century, particularly students of color and of poverty, administrators, teachers, parents, and policy makers now recognize the need to reexamine substantive fundamental approaches to change. Decentralized authority, expanded roles for teachers and parents in the decision-making process, and an increased emphasis on complex instruction and active learning have been increasingly recommended by reformers (Hallinger 1992). Hallinger goes on to say that by implication, the basis for school leadership expands to include teachers, and parents as well as the principal. Those adults who are closest to students should make wise judgments about changes that are needed in the school's educational program. These facets highlight a new role for principals (and teachers) in problem finding and problem solving -- a role increasingly referred to as transformational leadership.

Transformational leaders take on the responsibility of revitalizing a school. They define the need for change, create new visions, mobilize commitment to those visions and ultimately transform the organization (Tichy & Devanna 1990). Transformational leadership is about change, innovation and entrepreneurship. It is a process which consists of purposeful and organized search for changes, and systematic analysis. It is a behavioral process capable of being learned (Tichy & Devanna 1992). Therefore, new principal preparation programs must focus on developing facilitative power, developing and maintaining a collaborative, professional school culture, fostering teacher development and helping

them to define and solve problems more effectively. These programs must also address the troublesome "clinical gap" between classroom and practice. Coursework and learning should be designed around university/school district partnerships, clinical activities, and field work.

Professors within the Division of Urban Leadership and Policy Studies in Education at the University of Missouri - Kansas City recognized the need to transform its traditional educational administration program into one which prepares aspiring school administrators to be the new breed of leaders needed to meet educational challenges of the 21st century. Through a discussion of the Masters and Educational Specialists degree programs at UMKC, which were designed to develop transformational school leaders, I propose to address the following questions: What are the innovations needed in programs in order to improve the preparation of school leaders? What types of clinical experiences are critical? How are the challenges in preparation being met through collaborative efforts with school districts? Turning to our program, the two year implementation has provided some interesting and revealing data regarding effectiveness. These data will be shared.

In 1991 in a restructuring move in the School of Education, a new division - Urban Leadership and Policy Studies in Education was formed. Essentially, the new division was formed out of what had been two divisions, Educational Administration and Social Philosophical Foundations. The move was more than symbolic. It marked a changed purpose in the K-12 school leadership and certification programs. Through a program designed for developing transformational leadership and through research and service, we would seek the transformation of urban school systems.

A group consisting of members from the community at large, school teachers, principals, central office personnel, foundations, the State Department of Education, other school of education faculty and alumnae of educational administration programs were assembled to assist with the development of the new urban leadership program. The committee recognized the risks involved in developing a program around issues, i.e., unwillingness on the part of suburban and rural educators to identify with

the term urban: decrease in enrollment in educational administration programs. However, these stakeholders were among the strongest advocates of such an approach. All said that urban profile schools whether they existed in inner city districts, suburban districts or sometimes poverty rural areas, were the schools experiencing the biggest problems with success. Yet, the knowledge to develop urban schools into highly successful places is not a mystery. School leaders simply have failed to transform existing school cultures traditionally designed to sort students by race, class, and gender into school cultures designed around learning and development for all.

The urban agenda is urgent. Recent proposed reforms from state and federal policy groups (Year 2000, etc.) largely ignore the basic issues involved in reforming urban schooling. Most reform agenda carry a vision of white middle class schools of the 1950's and 60's. It is a political agenda not an educational one. The fact is that schooling in America is a major part of social reproduction. Children learn the values, beliefs, and stereotypes of their community cultures (Greene 1988). Restructuring, reforming, and other processes of tinkering with the existing system of schooling has not and will not change this fact.

The demographic make-up of faculties and administrative staffs in schools are predominantly Euro-ethnic white males and females. As we approach the year 2000 we are experiencing the "Browning" of America. Nearly half of the Nation's students will be of color by 2020 (Pallas et al. 1989). With the ethnic texture of this nation deepening, problems related to diversity will intensify rather than diminish, (Banks 1991/1992). Banks goes on to say that we need leaders and educators of goodwill, to participate in genuine discussions, dialogue, and debates that will help us formulate visionary and workable solutions and enable us to deal creatively with the challenges posed by the increasing diversity in the United States and the world. If schooling is to achieve a purpose of educating all with high quality, so that each has access to equal educational opportunities, then it is systemic-transformational change in school culture that must occur. Anything less is the same old game of American hegemony. Systemic cultural change in organizations isn't only the most difficult change, but the one about which we know the least.

In both Kansas and Missouri the principal certification requirements for administration consisted of 24 credits hours designed around certain identified courses and competencies. The educational administration program consisted of eight three hour courses, plus other courses in curriculum, psychology, and testing. The courses carried the names of required competencies. Does this sound familiar? Each faculty member became knowledgeable in 2-4 of the courses and taught them in regular rotation. A practicum is also a required component for certification and was one of the required courses. The new program not only had to be about transformational leadership but had to be delivered in such a way as to be consistent with the message and purpose that were to be invoked. On the other hand, the certification requirements did not go away, although, members of the Kansas and Missouri State Departments of Education were very supportive and flexible.

After a year of study and powerful discussions, a fundamentally different type of leadership development program was formed. This program is based upon the premise that leaders of transforming schools must possess the ability; 1) to develop into a facilitator of relationships and outcomes; 2) to develop collaborative and participative planning and decision making structures (teams); 3) to develop support networks from the community and in the school; 4) to develop human and fiscal resources that enhance and support the outcomes and purposes of the school; 5) to develop school organizations as cultures of renewal, risk, problem-solving, trust and caring, and; 6) to develop a school culture of reflective and critical thought concerning learning theory and practice, and human development.

First, all the competencies and course requirements, with the exception of the Practicum, were combined into three thematic courses of six credit hours each. The first Block is entitled Foundations of School Organization and Leadership; the second is Management and Administration of Schooling: the third, School, Teacher and Student Development. With the titles we conceded to the language of certification. These three themes represent an integration of administrative competencies.

Block I - Foundations of School Leadership and Organization
(6 credit hours)* 80 Contact Hours

Curriculum Focus:

The purpose of Block I is: to provide an introduction to the formal and informal structures of school organizations in the United States; to introduce students to the historical development of organizational theory and practice; to provide participants with the opportunity to analyze leadership qualities including their own; to assist each participant in the development of a personal leadership development plan; to provide experiences that begin the development of an ability to establish school cultures that are collaborative, participative, reflective and self renewing; to introduce participants to theories of instruction which directly relate to learning as a structure for schooling; to introduce the concept that schooling must include, in addition to regular academic programs, early childhood, children with special needs, life long learning and special programs relayed to careers, technology and the world of work in a Global society.

Block II - Building Administration, and Management
(6 Credit Hours)* 80 Contact Hours

Curriculum Focus:

The purpose of Block II is: to develop abilities in administrative and management work (organization ability, building and plant management, problem-solving, decision making, personnel management and collaborative structure) to a level of competency necessary for operating a school building; to develop abilities in supervising activity programs, special programs, and other alternative programs in a school building; to develop abilities in organizational development (outcome planning, participative management, two way information systems, assessment and evaluation processes, etc.) necessary for operating a school; to develop and improve abilities in written and oral communication to a level necessary for interacting at a professional level with the school community; to develop and apply knowledge related to legal issues of

student rights, teacher rights, state budget and finance laws, and laws governing operations of schools; to be able to implement Public Law 91-142 in a public school; to have knowledge of and experience in using the Missouri Teacher Performance Evaluation Process.

Bock III - Student, Staff and Organization (6 Credit Hours)* 80 Contact Hours

Curriculum Focus:

The purpose of Block III is: to develop participants understanding and knowledge of the concepts and theories of developmental learning as it applies to learning by students, adult development, and organizations. Participants will develop an understanding of how to plan and establish a " Learning Organization Culture." Students will establish a skill and ability level for leading and developing a learning organization to the degree that they could initiate such an approach as a building administrator.

*Each BLOCK WILL MEET DURING A REGULAR COURSE PERIOD OF 40 CONTACT HOURS IN THE NORMAL SCHEDULE. EACH BLOCK WILL ALSO MEET ON FOUR SATURDAYS DURING A SEMESTER FOR 20 CONTACT HOURS. EACH BLOCK WILL ALSO MEET AS A COHORT GROUP INVOLVED IN FIELD EXPERIENCES FOR 20 CONTACT HOURS.

Each block is team taught by UMKC professors and two or three cohort facilitators. Each team of professors and cohort facilitators begin with a group of students in Block I and continue with the same group through Block III. The professors engage students in simulations, scenarios and case studies, small and large group discussions and a minimal amount of lectures. These ongoing instructional activities serve to connect the Blocks and provide connected active learning experiences. The facilitators are largely responsible for mentoring field action activities, developing the Cohort as a support unit, and using HRD approaches for structuring the Cohorts. These individuals are practitioners from the many schools located within the Kansas City Metropolitan Area.

OVERVIEW

Educational Administration Course work 27 Credit Hours

1.	Blocks I, II, III	18 Credit Hours
2.	Practicum	3 Credit Hours
3.	Elective Admin. Courses	6 Credit Hours

Foundations And Supporting Areas 12 Credit Hours

1.	Curriculum Study	3 Credit Hours
2.	Foundations	6 Credit Hours
3.	Research	3 Credit Hours

Total Masters Program 39 Credit Hours
Total Educational Specialist Program 63 Credit Hours

How is it working? What we have as of this time is mostly how we feel and what they have told us in their "portfolios." Portfolios which contain a journal of reflections, an individual project, a cohort project, and a synthesis paper is how we assess continued growth from Block to Block. Below you will find comments students have made as reflections in their journals. These comments have been placed into three categories; Format and curriculum of the program; Effectiveness of the cohort group and cohort facilitators; and Effectiveness of the team of professors.

Format and Curriculum of the Program

By the way I loved the in-basket of Ms. Tic! I feel the class interaction and discussion of real problems is helpful.

The TOBI profile we completed just confirmed what our group already knows about itself. We enjoyed discussing past problems and how we should have handled situations in a better way. We wanted to learn from mistakes which we felt was a real sign of growth.

From my point of view it is now very difficult to sit and listen to a lecture type of lesson after we have grown into the level of discussion we participate in together.

I look forward to class time in order to ponder questions of the future. The discourse generated in class is valuable as I try to work towards growth and change in my building.

I felt a rush of excitement, uncertainty, uneasiness, and thrill as we built our transformational schools.

We discuss real life situations or in-baskets and help each other. This is one of the things I will miss the most about ending the Block courses. I can' t help but wonder how we will do in other classes that don't stress cooperation and collaborative efforts of students.

I look back at our first Block experience and find it hard to believe how much I've grown in many ways but especially in understanding the dynamics of the "system" and how influence is really contingent upon relationships.

This semester has been really enlightening - I guess I should trust the process! Concepts have really come together and are beginning to form a real picture of transformational schooling - I think this program has prepared me well - mostly by forcing me to face difficult issues and beliefs and helping me to synthesize the information.

Effectiveness of the Cohort Facilitator and Cohort Group

Our cohort group has grown very close and supportive of each other.

Our joint meeting with the cohort groups from Block I certainly brought back memories. They asked many of the same type of questions that we did when we were at that stage, i.e., Are we on the right track or are we off in left field. Not being led through this process step by step was the most beneficial learning experience.

I feel that we have bonded very closely in this small group and can depend on each other.

I am really excited. The principal from Swinney will be working with us. I hope to attend classes and participate. It is really beneficial to hear from people in the field.

I think this was a good learning experience for our group because we realized very soon the importance of group dynamics and how predisposed emotions/personalities can have an impact on how one function in a collaborative effort.

Effectiveness of the Team of Professors

I'm going to miss the discussion and the debate. And I certainly don't look forward to the usual slate of classes and Profs.

I would like to officially record my thanks to Ralph and Johnetta for a rewarding and valuable experience at UMKC. I feel, as most of us do, that the Block courses truly prepared us for leadership and effective management roles in the future. The network of good friends and colleagues can never be duplicated. With the practicum as a culminating activity, I was able to make informed observations of management in schools. I feel that this past eighteen months at UMKC have been some of the most enjoyable I've had. THANKS!!

These comments were selected from Block Three Portfolios. If we had chosen to share from Block One Portfolios, the comments would have been different. In some cases very different. Comments often relate to; I wonder if I am doing the right thing; They don't seem to tell us what is expected; I am not sure I am doing it right; I was so mad at our cohort. They couldn't agree on what to do again; Why don't they just tell us what to do.

As of this time, we think we are on the right path. We are still developing and building. We seem to learn each time.

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